

CLASSIFICATION

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1. At a meeting of the East German Council of Ministers held in East Berlin on 4 March 1954, the draft of a proposed education law was discussed and was finally unanimously adopted. In the discussion Lothar Bolz suggested that the East German press should give greater coverage to gains already made in the educational field. However, he noted the unsatisfactory discipline and lack of order prevalent in many East German schools and attributed it largely to the lack of cooperation between teachers and parents on the one hand, and the "Pioneer" organizations on the other. He labeled those teachers who refused to cooperate with parents and the Pioneer organizations as "undemocratic" and complained that often administrative officers took only a "formalistic" view of educational problems.
2. One of the chief weaknesses in the East German school system is a lack of qualified teachers and administrative functionaries. Bolz stated that in the past teachers and functionaries had qualified themselves politically; however, they lacked the necessary qualifications as teachers. He contended that many teachers and functionaries, and even members of the Education Ministry, failed to realize the importance of criticism and self-criticism in education. As a result the SED shop party organization (BPO) of the Ministry had discussed the situation at length. Errors in the work of the Ministry were brought to light and several leading employees, including Main Department Heads for Education, were relieved of their functions.
3. Bolz contended that the unsatisfactory conditions in East German schools resulted largely from poor direction and guidance by the Ministry of Education and the Bezirk Councils. He emphasized that one of the worst errors was the continual arbitrary administrative interference by the Bezirk Councils and the Ministry of Education.
4. Bolz stated further that the Central Committee of the SED had criticized the Ministry and many Bezirk and Kreis Councils as well as the schools themselves because they had drawn too sharp a distinction between professional and political tasks.

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5. An unidentified employee of the State Control Commission stated that following a cursory examination of the Ministry of Education it had been decided that several leading functionaries would have to be replaced. He complained that many leading functionaries were completely inexperienced in educational matters and therefore could not be expected to do a satisfactory job in this important field.
6. In closing the session, Walter Ulbricht remarked that one of the chief weaknesses of the present East German educational set-up is the lack of control and of systematic implementation of directives by the Ministry of Education. This was especially true of Berlin and the surrounding areas. He stated that the purpose of the proposed law was to eliminate this and the other weaknesses discussed in the session.

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